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ASSESSMENT

The Psychologically Violent Parental Practices Inventory (PVPPI): English Translation

Marie-Hélène Gagné
Joëlle Pouliot-Lapointe
Marie-Pier St-Louis

ABSTRACT. This paper reports the translation and preliminary validation process of the Psychologically Violent Parental Practices Inventory (PVPPI). The original Francophone inventory was previously tested with 306 Francophone students recruited in fifth to ninth grade classes. Findings of the original study had suggested a coherent two-factor structure, good construct validity, and satisfactory internal consistency. The PVPPI was translated into English and tested on a convenience sample of 90 girls

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and boys recruited in fifth and sixth grade classes of two English schools in the Quebec City area. The psychometric properties of this translation seem to reproduce those of the original French inventory. On the whole, PVPPI appears to be a promising tool that could find practical, as well as scientific applications. doi:10.1300/J135v07n01_05 [Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-HAWORTH. E-mail address: <docdelivery@haworthpress.com> Website: <<http://www.HaworthPress.com>> © 2007 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved.]

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Many young North Americans are the targets of their parents' psychological aggression and violence. In the United States, a survey of a representative sample of children and youth aged 2 to 17 years estimated the psychological/emotional abuse rate at 103/1000 (Finkelhor, Ormrod, Turner, & Hamby, 2005). In this survey, psychological/emotional abuse occurred when "an adult made child scared or feel really bad by name calling, saying mean things, or saying they didn't want the child" (Finkelhor et al., 2005, p. 23), and was measured by a single item.

Surveys using the well-known *Parent-Child Conflict Tactics Scales* (PCCTS; Straus, Hamby, Finkelhor, Moore, & Runyan, 1998) provide even higher rates. For instance, 85.6% of American children and 78.6% of Quebec children are psychologically assaulted at least once a year by a caregiver (Clément, Bouchard, Jetté, & Laferrière, 2000; Straus et al., 1998). Moreover, psychological maltreatment is the main type of abuse identified in 19% of cases reported to Canadian child protection agencies, and the second or third type in 42% of cases (Trocmé & Wolfe, 2001).

Unfortunately, few reliable, valid, and conceptually exhaustive instruments exist to measure psychological violence suffered by children and adolescents within their families. Most existing measures are designed to be used retrospectively, while others are directed at parents (see Gagné, Lavoie, & Fortin, 2003 for a review). But it is also important to document psychological violence from the children's perspective, because (1) their perception of their own victimization could be more strongly associated with well-being, adjustment, and future mental health outcomes (McGee, Wolfe, Yuen, Wilson, & Carnochan, 1995) and (2) prevention and intervention programs should be anchored in their points of view, and not only that of parents and practitioners.

In order to fill this gap, Gagné et al. (2003) developed and validated the Psychologically Violent Parental Practices Inventory (PVPPI). Items of the original French version, entitled "Inventaire des conduites parentales psychologiquement violentes" (ICPPV), were developed on the double basis of a conceptual literature review about psychological violence and similar constructs (emotional and verbal abuse, psychological maltreatment, and the like), and findings of a qualitative study documenting the manifestations of psychological violence in families (Gagné & Bouchard, 2000). This procedure maximized the content and ecological validity of the ICPPV, which takes into account several conceptual dimensions of psychological violence. For English definitions of each of these conceptual dimensions, see Gagné and Bouchard (2004).

Designed for 10- to 17-year-old children, the PVPPI measures the frequency of a range of psychologically violent parental practices from the youths' perspective. Currently, this self-report inventory is used in various research studies being conducted in Quebec, France, and Chile (experimental Spanish version). For instance, studies using the French ICPPV have shown that children attending special classes for behavior problems report significantly more psychological violence than their peers attending normal classes (Gagné et al., 2003); that psychological violence in the family is associated with social alienation, defined as feelings of dissatisfaction and anger towards friends and peers (Dupré-Blanchard, Pouliot-Lapointe, & St-Louis, 2005); and with several dimensions of the child's perception of parental conflict (Gagné, Drapeau, Melançon, Saint-Jacques, & Lépine, in revision). All these findings support the construct validity of the PVPPI (McIntire & Miller, 2000).

The purpose of the present study was to produce an English version of this questionnaire, which reproduces as closely as possible the psychometric properties of the original French version. This brief paper describes the translation process, reports preliminary psychometric properties (internal consistency, construct validity) for this translation, and compares them with those of the original French inventory.

METHOD

Translation Procedure

In order to maximize the similarity between French and English versions, the parallel back-translation procedure suggested by Vallerand (1989) was used. This method is meant to ensure validity and reliability

of the translated questionnaire. First, the French ICPPV was translated into English by two voluntary translators who worked independent of each other. Next, two other translators back-translated each English preliminary version into French. Final decisions regarding item formulation were made in committee with the participation of all translators and three members of the research team. At the end of this process, an experimental English version of the PVPPI was produced, linguistically revised, and tested.

Participants

The experimental PVPPI was administered to a non-probabilistic sample recruited in two English public schools of the Quebec City area, with middle to high SES backgrounds. This sample comprised 90 fifth and sixth grade children, 49% girls and 51% boys, aged 10 to 13 years. Informed parental consent was required, and children were free to participate. Among them, 67% lived in an intact nuclear family. According to the principals, the majority of these children are from a Francophone family and speak French at home, even though they are enrolled in an English school.

Measures

The questionnaire included a sociodemographic section as well as a number of self-report instruments. These include (1) the experimental PVPPI, (2) the psychological aggression scale of the *Parent-Child Conflict Tactics Scales* (PCCTS: Straus et al., 1998), and (3) a scale of negative feelings towards parent-child relationship (Gagné et al., 2003).

The Psychologically Violent Parental Practices Inventory. The PVPPI includes 32 items measuring the frequency of various psychologically violent parental practices, plus 6 fillers considered as appropriate means for disciplining the child. Its original French version was previously tested with 306 girls and boys from the fifth to ninth grades (Gagné et al., 2003). An exploratory factor analysis showed a two-factor structure. The first factor, Excessive Harshness (22 items), refers to day-to-day violence. It includes lack of attention, interest, respect, constant blaming, excessive punishment, and excessive restriction or control over activities and social contacts. The second factor, Parental Disorganization (10 items), refers to more deviant behavior. It includes exposing/involving the child in substance abuse or criminality, exposing the child to marital violence, spurning, explicit rejection, and failure

to protect. The global 32-item score, as well as the two factors, showed good construct validity, as well as satisfying internal consistency ($\alpha = .90, .89$, and $.80$). For validation purposes, the 6 fillers were used as an Appropriate Discipline scale ($\alpha = .76$).

The PVPPI covers occurrences that took place over a period of one year. Answers are indicated on a 4-point Likert-type scale: 0 = Never happened; 1 = Happened once or twice; 2 = Happened more than twice, but not regularly; 3 = Happened regularly, many times a month. Items are presented as "a list of things parents might do when they are angry, tired, or for any other reason." The word parent was defined as meaning, "all the adults who live with you and who are responsible for you in your everyday life." The PVPPI also includes six items referring to appropriate disciplinary practices, but these are not taken into account in the psychological violence scores. These items were originally included for ethical purposes and also to avoid the systematic response bias. However, as was the case with the original French validation study, these six items are used to calculate a score of appropriate disciplinary practices in order to establish discriminant validity. Some sample items are presented in the Appendix. Those who are interested in using the PVPPI can contact the first author (Gagné) to obtain a free copy.

The Parent-Child Conflict Tactics Scales. The psychological aggression scale of the PCCTS includes five items showing an internal consistency of .60. The validity of the PCCTS, and previous Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS; Straus, 1979), is supported by a large body of research. Even though this measure is generally directed at parents, the authors affirm that it can be used with adolescents and preadolescents. For the purpose of this study, the 4-point answer scale adapted by Clément et al. (2000) was used: 0 = Never happened; 1 = Happened once or twice; 2 = Happened 3 to 5 times; 4 = Happened 6 times or more.

Scale of Negative Feelings. The scale of negative feelings toward the parent-child relationship was developed concurrently to the ICPPV for the purpose of original validation. It includes 12 bipolar items, each one describing two opposite feelings towards parents (e.g., "some young people feel comfortable confiding in their parents," but "others are always scared of what their parents will say"). Items were formulated on the basis of various feelings associated with sustaining psychological violence by parents: fear/insecurity, rejection, shame/humiliation, anger/frustration, sorrow/sadness/despair, loneliness, culpability, low self-esteem, confusion, and feelings of ragging. First, respondents choose which alternative best applies to them; then, they specify whether it is "very true" or "rather true" for them. Gagné et al. (2003) report an internal

consistency alpha coefficient of .91 for this scale. Like the PVPPI, it was back-translated for the purpose of the present study.

Procedure

With school authorization, an informed consent form was handed out to all children in the fifth and sixth grades for them to give to their parent(s). Children who returned this form signed by a parent received and completed the questionnaire at school. The questionnaire was administered collectively in a room assigned for this purpose. The response rate was 41.3% and there was a 1.3% absenteeism rate. Two researchers were present to explain the procedure, to answer participants' questions while answering the questionnaire, and to debrief afterwards. Some school practitioners (i.e., psychologist, psycho-educator) participated in the debriefing session, and a list of resources was handed out to all participants.

Analyses

Data were entered and verified with SPSS 12.0 for Windows. All scores were computed by calculating the mean of all item responses for each scale; when more than 10% of the responses were missing for one scale, the score was considered missing. The correspondence of means and variances between the two versions was verified with Student's *t*-tests for independent samples, using both data from the present study ($n = 90$, fifth and sixth grade Anglophone or bilingual children) and data from the original French study ($n = 178$, fifth and sixth grade Francophone children). Internal consistency of the three scores of the PVPPI was estimated with the Cronbach's alpha. A matrix of correlations (Pearson's *r*) was used to present indices of convergent and discriminant validity (both types of construct validity) for each PVPPI score.

RESULTS

Mean Differences Between French and English Versions

Using *t*-tests, mean and variance differences between French and English version samples were tested for the global score, the Excessive Harshness score, and the Parental Disorganization score. No significant difference was found as both groups showed similar means and variances on all scores. For the three *t*-tests, power varied between 5.5% and 12.4%

at a .05 alpha level and Cohen's d varied between .03 and .12, indicating negligible effect sizes (Stevens, 1990). These findings support the equivalence of the two versions, since both samples are similar in terms of age, school grade, and even primary language and culture for most participants.

Internal Consistency

Internal consistency coefficients were .92 for the global score, .90 for the Excessive Harshness score, and .76 for Parental Disorganization score, which is satisfying and similar to the French ICPPV (the original ICPPV alpha coefficients were .90, .89, and .80, respectively). However, two Parental Disorganization items showed an absence of correlation with the Parental Disorganization score. These are: "Fought with your other parent (or with his/her partner) when they argue" (item-total $r = -.01$) and "Got drunk or took drugs in front of you" (item-total $r = -.04$). In the original French study, the item-total r for these items was .50 and .72. Despite these discrepancies, these two items were maintained in the internal consistency analyses. First, the small sample size ($N = 90$) precluded any generalization of findings. Second, the forms of psychological violence described in these items are part of most definitions of psychological violence. For these reasons, it was deemed too early to remove these items from the PVPPI scores.

Another item was not endorsed by anyone in this study sample: "Encouraged you to get drunk or to take drugs." Because the variance for this item was null, the alpha coefficient for the Parental Disorganization score had to be calculated with the remaining nine items.

Construct Validity

The correlation matrix in Table 1 displays various indices of construct validity. To make comparisons between the two versions easier, correlations calculated in the original French study appear in parentheses. All correlations are significant. The three PVPPI scores are strongly correlated with one another, and also with the PCCTS psychological aggression score and with the negative feelings score (convergent validity). Correlations of appropriate disciplinary practices with all other scores are of moderate strength. Overall, the correlations obtained with the English PVPPI are similar to those obtained with the original French ICPPV, except for the Parental Disorganization score, displaying systematically higher correlations in English.

TABLE 1. Correlation Matrix (*r*) Between PVPPI, PCCTS, Negative Feelings Scale, and Appropriate Discipline Scale

Scores	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Global PVPPI ^a	1					
2. PVPPI, Excessive Harshness	.99 (.98)	1				
3. PVPPI, Parental Disorganization	.85 (.66)	.76 (.51)	1			
4. PVPPI, Appropriate Discipline	.47 (.50)	.48 (.53)	.34 (.23)	1		
5. PCCTS, Psychological Aggression ^b	.71 (.71)	.71 (.69)	.60 (.52)	.47 (.47)	1	
6. Negative Feelings ^c	.74 (.76)	.57 (.65)	.57 (.50)	.37 (.26)	.57 (.65)	1

Note. All correlations are significant at $p < .01$, two-tailed.

^a $N = 83$, ^b $N = 84$, ^c $N = 78$.

DISCUSSION

Findings of this study suggest that the PVPPI is equivalent to the original French ICPPV in terms of item formulation and meaning, and that its psychometric properties are generally reproduced. Internal consistency coefficients are very similar for both versions for the global score, as well as for the two subscale scores, and indices of construct validity are very close to those reported by Gagné et al. (2003) in the original validation study. These conclusions are especially true for the global score and for the Excessive Harshness score. For in-depth interpretation of these findings, see Gagné et al. (2003).

However, the Parental Disorganization score showed some differences with the original, both in terms of reliability and validity. Internal consistency of this score is slightly weaker than in the original French version because of three items that are seldom or never endorsed and that do not correlate significantly with the total scale. Also, the correlations between Parental Disorganization score and other scores of psychological violence, negative feelings towards parents, and appropriate disciplinary practices are generally higher than what was computed for the French version. These discrepancies might be due to the small sample size in the actual study ($N = 90$). Because the Parental Disorganization items refer to unusual parental behaviors in the normal population, this sample might be too small to obtain enough variance on these items, thwarting the calculation of Cronbach's alpha coefficients. But this could also suggest that the English version of Parental Disorganization items was not perceived in exactly the same way as the French version,

or that this subconstruct needs revision. In fact, exposure to domestic violence and parental deviant behaviors and lifestyles (e.g., substance abuse, delinquency) may be best described as social issues associated to psychological violence, not as psychological violence per se. More studies are needed to establish the psychometric properties of the Parental Disorganization subscale, especially large-sample studies using other measures of parental delinquency, substance abuse, and partner abuse and conflict. Meanwhile, researchers who will be using the PVPPI are invited to pay special attention to this subscale, and in particular to the three potentially problematic items identified in this study.

Table 1 shows that correlations between PVPPI scores, especially the global score and the Excessive Harshness score, and the widely used PCCTS psychological aggression subscale (Straus et al., 1998) are quite high ($> .70$). So what are the advantages of using the PVPPI? To start with, the PVPPI is designed to be conceptually exhaustive, while the PCCTS is frequently critiqued for its partial, shaky theoretical basis. Secondly, the PVPPI provides a detailed description of many parental behaviors implicated in the dynamics of psychological violence toward children. Finally, the PVPPI is designed for youths, not for parents. Although the authors of the PCCTS argue that it can be used with pre-adolescents and adolescents, the instrument has apparently never been validated with this population.

The main limitation of this study is its small sample size. For this reason, it was not possible to replicate the factor analysis, and the two-factor structure of the PVPPI was taken for granted. Another limitation lies in the 41.3% response rate, due in part to the ethical obligation to obtain parental consent through the medium of the child. Finally, this study included only fifth to sixth grade children, despite the fact that PVPPI was designed for 10- to 17-year-old youths. More studies are needed to provide further support for the validity of the PVPPI.

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APPENDIX

SAMPLE PVPPI ITEMS

During the last year, how often did your mother, your father or any other adult who takes care of you . . .

Excessive harshness

- force you to take on huge responsibilities at home, compared to other youngsters your age (cleaning the whole house, raising younger brothers and sisters . . .)?
- watch you to scold you as soon as you make a mistake?
- hit or break objects when he/she is angry with you?
- humiliate or ridicule you in front of other people?
- put down people you love in front of you (your other parent, a friend . . .)?

Parental Disorganization

- tell you things like: "I regret having you," "You are a burden," or "I never wanted you"?
- tell you things like: "It's all your fault that I have so many problems"?
- tell you things like: "You'll never do anything good with your life," "You never understand anything," "You are stupid"?
- not defend or protect you when you needed it?
- send you to live somewhere else or kick you out, saying that he/she was tired or sick of you?